

*“Inspired By Dreams: Depth Psychology and The Mythic Imagination”*

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The Jewish tradition teaches that Wisdom is like a city surrounded by a high wall with seventy gates. Some gates are wide, allowing all who wish to come and go freely. Other gates are narrow, almost non-existent, and the traveler must summon her courage and cleverness in order to pass through the slender gap. The human psyche, like the abstract concept of Wisdom, also has many ports of entry, the most common and accessible of which are the personal Dream, and the collective Myth.

At the dawn of the twentieth century, a select group of psychologists found clues to the nature of mental illness hidden in our nightly encounters with the subconscious. Almost immediately, the work of Sigmund Freud and C.G. Jung was being applied to the study of comparative religion and mythology. This new batch of scholars discovered that the subjective world of faith seemed to be infused with common, some would say universals motifs. By the middle of the last century, it was well established that the process which produces dreams in an individual, and that which produces an organized system of religious expression, has its roots in the same soil.

Working concurrently with those engaged in the mapping of the unconscious, a new group of artists were finding novel ways of applying the familiar images of myth to the modern sensibility. Writers like James Joyce and T.S. Eliot, working independently of the psychological revolution taking place in Vienna, produced works that integrated their own unconscious fears about the health of our society, with the existing mythological images at their disposal. For Joyce, the myth was Greek, for Eliot it was Christian, but the results were the same, a terrifying vision of the growing sense of the insignificance of the modern man.

I have attempted to compile a representative sample of works that deal directly with the questions raised by Freud and Jung in their groundbreaking psychoanalytic work. Many of these books deal with dreams and the common symbols associated with this unconscious environment. I have also assembled many of the world's most familiar sacred scriptures. More than simple stories of good and evil, inspired by dreams and visions, these works still hold the power to transform lives.

My collection of fiction, though not necessarily inspired by Freud and Jung directly, have a definitive link to the two men's work. These novels present waking life as a series of dream-like experiences, where the protagonist is engaged on an interior battlefield. The novels in my collection represent an archetypal hero who's greatest enemy lies within, and whose ultimate triumph comes not with a thrust of a sword, but with a moment of simple yet profoundly effecting clarity. My books show that the gates of Wisdom are many, and we as travelers pass through them, sometimes without realizing while we slumber, but most definitely while we read.